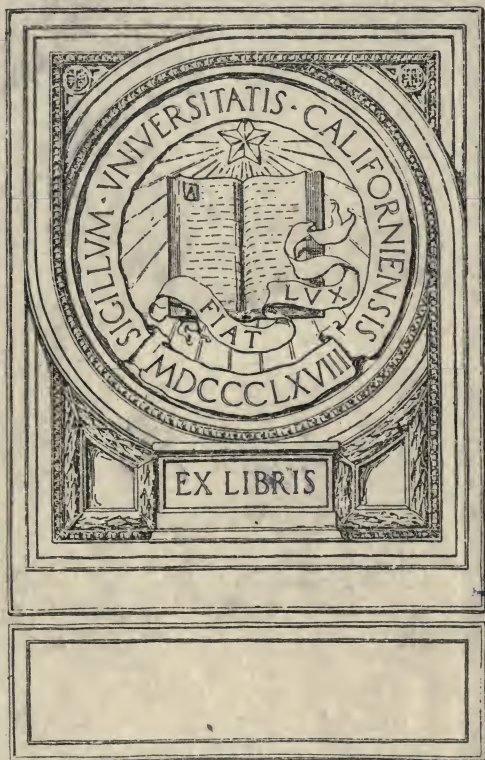


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WORDSWORTH'S,

PREFACES AND ESSAYS ON POETRY;

WITH

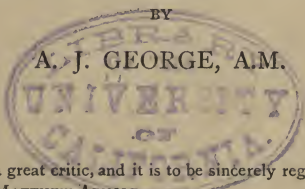
LETTER TO LADY BEAUMONT.

(1798-1845.)

Edited with Introduction and Notes

BY

A. J. GEORGE, A.M.

A circular purple ink stamp from the University of California library is positioned behind the editor's name. The text "UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA" is visible within the stamp's border.

"Wordsworth was a great critic, and it is to be sincerely regretted that he has not left us more criticism." — MATTHEW ARNOLD.

"Admirable specimens of philosophical criticism." — SIR HENRY TAYLOR.

"No one can read the reasoning of these Prefaces without instruction." — PROF. SHARP.

"The Prefaces are most valuable contributions to our literature of criticism." — AUBREY DE VERE.

BOSTON, U.S.A.:

D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS.

1892.

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TO

Aubrey De Vere, LL.D.,

THE FRIEND OF WORDSWORTH,
WHO HAS NOBLY ILLUSTRATED IN PROSE AND VERSE
THE PRINCIPLES OF LITERATURE AND LIFE
CONTAINED IN THESE
PREFACES.

“ High is our calling, Friend ! — Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues),
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned — to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, Oh ! When Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak mindedness —
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard.”



INTRODUCTION.



“He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen — on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears;
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us, and we had ease;
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o’er the sunlit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth returned; for there was she
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furl’d,
The freshness of the early world.”¹

A spirit of manly independence has characterized every era of reformation, but in our own century this spirit has had a wider range, and has manifested itself in a greater variety of movements, than ever before. Independence in literature and art, in church and state, in social and political life, has been the distinguishing feature of the nineteenth century. In the literature of Greece and Rome the state is the centre, and the individual is of little account. In the Middle Ages the church

¹ Matthew Arnold.

is the centre, and here too the individual is lost in the system. In modern literature the state and the church are represented, but not as central, the individual has become the centre of interest. The idea of the individual as a hero because he belongs to a certain class has given way to the idea of the hero as a private citizen, as Tennyson says —

“And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.”

The happy warrior is

“A soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes.”

It is this elevation of the private man to the place of honor in literature and art, in church and state, in social and political life, that has won for the century the title “revolutionary.” The revolutionary movement in literature consisted chiefly in the restoration of passion, “which is highest reason in a soul sublime.” The eighteenth century was an age of reason, an age of prose; in it spiritual east winds prevailed, and only a few of those who faithfully strove to be loyal to the higher ideal were successful and won a hearing. Thomson and Collins saw the faint glow of the coming dawn, while Allan Ramsay and Hamilton of Bangour, through the pathos of the ballad and Scotch song, exerted a marked effect upon the poetry of the generation.

Beginning thus, the return to nature became more clearly marked when Gray turned to the Country Churchyard and Goldsmith to the Deserted Village, when Crabbe sang of the Borough, when Cowper mused by the banks of the languid Ouse, and Burns crooned his immortal lyrics on the Scottish

hillside. Its first movement was completed on the publication of the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798.

Passion in its relation to modern poetry shows itself in Byron, Shelley, and Keats as the passion of youth, with a tendency to a passionate wail of despair; in Arnold, Clough, and Rossetti it appears in the form of Greek idealism; in Keble and Newman we see it as a spiritual light, a deity within the soul; while in Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning it becomes the connecting link between the priestly and the scientific nature, and utters itself in the prayer —

“Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell.”

The origin of the *Lyrical Ballads* has often been told. Its joint authorship is alluded to in the Prelude as follows: —

“That summer, under whose indulgent skies
Upon smooth Quantock’s airy ridge we roved
Unchecked, or loitered mid her sylvan combs,
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
The bright-eyed Mariner;
And I, associate with such labor, steeped
In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,
Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,
After the perils of his moonlight ride,
Near the loud waterfall.”

Although this volume did not prove profitable to the Bristol publisher, it secured the poetic fame of its authors, and enriched the world of English poetry as no one volume has since done, in that it re-established forever the principle that the soil of true poetry is a genuine human heartedness, a rev-

erence for the beauty and the worth of nature as revealing the soul of God, the sanctity of the domestic affections, whether under cottage roofs or in the "perfumed chambers of the great." In 1800 a second edition was published, somewhat enlarged; it contained the famous Preface which set forth Wordsworth's theory of poetry in general and of his own poetry in particular, and which called down upon him a storm of abuse second only to that caused by the poems themselves. The years from 1798 to 1815—the midsummer of Wordsworth's genius, in which he raised that "*monumentum ære perennius*"—were years of neglect, obloquy, ridicule, and disparagement. It is to these same years that we owe the sound criticism and wise reflection of the Prefaces.

In the edition of 1802 the preface to the second edition (1800) was enlarged, and there was added an appendix on "Poetic Diction." These were repeated in successive editions until 1815 when, in the edition published that year, the first volume contained a new preface and a supplementary essay on the poetry of the last two centuries; at the close of the second volume was placed the preface to the edition of 1802 and the essay on Poetic Diction. These prefaces were changed by alterations, insertions, and omissions, in the various editions, until they received their last revision in 1845.

While it is true that Wordsworth vanquished his opponents more by his poems than by his Prefaces, the two are so inter-related that the history of one is the history of both. Of no artist can it be more truly said than of Wordsworth that he builded better than he knew. Artists cannot explain the mystery of their art, and yet they can at times reveal to us much that is helpful to an appreciation of their work. (Every artist brings into the world of art an entirely new thing—his

own personality — and consequently must create the taste by which he is to be judged.

These Prefaces admit us, as far as it is possible for us to be admitted, into the secrets of the poet's workmanship ; they lay bare some fundamental processes and do much to show us the truth respecting the origin, the purpose, and the power of poetry. Mr. F. W. Myers says : "The essays effected, what is perhaps as much as the writer on art can fairly hope to accomplish. They placed in striking light that side of the subject which had been too long ignored ; they aided in recalling an art which had become conventional and fantastic into the normal current of English thought and speech." "In his first efforts," says De Vere, "Wordsworth was doubtless somewhat too much of a radical reformer as regards the abuses which had long corrupted language. His remarks on that subject seemed to assume that the language of common life which he recommended for poetical purposes, differed little from that of good prose writings, a statement to which there are many exceptions. He did not succeed in *thus* substituting the language of common life for poetic diction ; but he did a much better thing. He dug deep into the ore of manly thoughts, and finding there a corresponding tongue, both new and true, he blew away the dry dust of conventionalities and affectations, and replaced a false poetic diction by a genuine one."

As I have said, the revolutionary spirit in this century has been general ; and it is but natural that, if it altered the conception of poetry, it should at the same time affect the principles of criticism. Following the history of criticism from Aristotle to Matthew Arnold, in Italy, Spain, France, Germany, and England, one finds that there is substantial agreement upon the idea that the end of art is to give pleasure. Each nation,

however, has had its own interpretation of pleasure, and hence the history of criticism is exceedingly complex.

The etymological meaning of the word critic is a judge, and to the present time it has retained with varying emphasis this idea. Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, Aristarchus, and Boileau judged by fixed principles established by the court of their predecessors. They rested their opinion upon a logical basis, they appealed to established canons and accepted definitions, and all that was necessary for such critics was a knowledge of these historical precedents. This classical criticism held unlimited power until the close of the last century. The divine right of such an order was then challenged both in Germany and England, where the right of individual judgment was being insisted upon. The prominence of the personal element, in which likes and dislikes took the place of established rules, characterized the romantic school; this in turn gave way to the principle of induction. Under the influence of Goethe, Sainte-Beuve, and Matthew Arnold, this movement, by uniting the classical and the romantic, has resulted in producing that spirit of disinterestedness by which alone the real in art can be recognized.

"The form of this world passes; and I would fain occupy myself with that only which constitutes abiding relations," said Goethe. M. Sainte-Beuve, speaking of the function of criticism, says: "The first consideration for us is, not whether we are amused and pleased by a work of art or mind, nor is it whether we are touched by it. What we should seek first of all is, — ought we to be amused, are we right in being moved by it, in applauding it?" Again he says: "The critic is the man who knows how to read and who can teach others how to read." "Criticism," says Matthew Arnold, "is a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world."

The classical school was judicial, dealt with a difference in degree, and required knowledge of precedents. The scientific school is inductive, deals with differences in kind, and requires both knowledge and sympathy. So long as the classical school ruled was it any wonder that the history of literature revealed the triumph of author over critic? The war which Wordsworth waged against the old judicial criticism was of the greatest moment both for the poet and the critic. In these Prefaces we have the principles which constitute the foundation of inductive criticism.

“You must love him ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.”

It is doubtless natural that one should enjoy and praise Wordsworth's poetry first, but his criticism should by no means be neglected, for, believe me, whether one goes to him for poetry or criticism, one will not leave him without a blessing.

“Wisdom sheathed

In song love-humble; contemplations high,
That built like larks their nests upon the ground;
Insight and vision, sympathies profound
That spanned the total of humanity;
These were the gifts which God poured forth at large
On man through him; and he was faithful to his charge.”¹

As regards Wordsworth's prose style little need be said. When a poet chooses to adopt the prose form one expects to find the same characteristics as distinguished his verse. Style, either in prose or verse, is the constant transpiration of character. As it is the distinctly personal element that renders Wordsworth's poetry “*non verba sed tonitrua*,” so in his prose one finds everywhere these elements of strength, dignity, purity, and truth united with a subtle thought and tender sensibility.

¹ Aubrey De Vere.

which individualize and give character to his style. There is a ruggedness in the sentence which makes it often austere and heavy, but it never falls into the opposite fault of the florid and the ornate. It may be said that Wordsworth's style is everywhere distinguished for its manliness, — "*suavitas austera et solidà.*"

The seminary method of teaching English literature makes necessary the publication of the best texts both of literature and criticism in a form and at a price accessible to every student. The day has gone by when pupils can be lectured into what they should think about literature. The successful teacher is the one who is best able to stimulate the student to research and discovery — to select and painstaking reading.

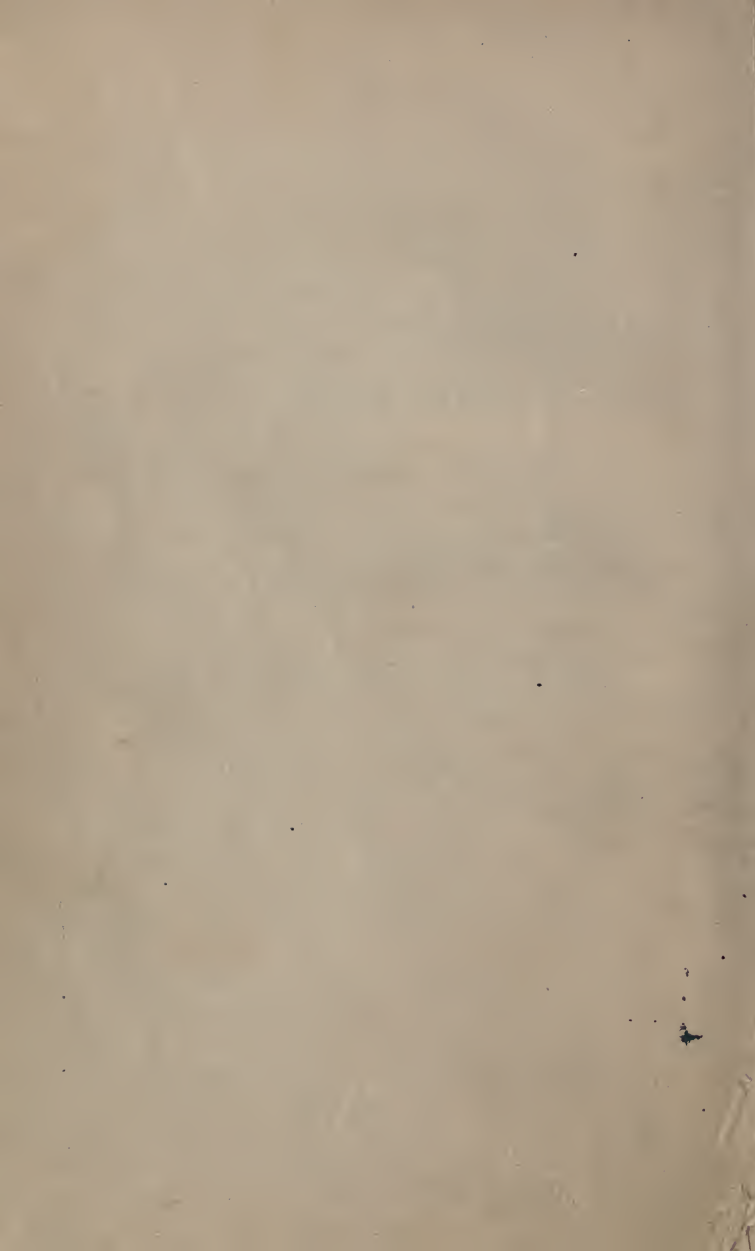
My thanks are due to Mrs. St. John of Ithaca, New York, for timely assistance in the matter of text, and for calling my attention to a possible inaccuracy in the date of the second essay, as recorded in the bibliography of Wordsworth. It is certain that the proper date is 1802 and not 1815, as given by Professor Knight. The order of the last two essays has been changed from that found in Professor Knight's edition of the poet's works. I cannot see how an essay supplementary to the preface of 1815 can precede the preface. I am very grateful for permission to associate this edition of the Prefaces with the name of one who has seen with singular clearness and has expressed with singular force and beauty the "Wisdom and Truth," the "Genius and Passion," of Wordsworth.

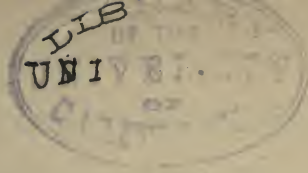
I have used the text of the edition of 1845 as given in Grosart's edition of the prose works of Wordsworth. Of the dates prefixed to each work the first refers to the year of composition; the second, to the year of the author's last revision.

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WORDSWORTH'S PREFACES.

PREFACE,

1800-1845.

THE first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.¹

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them, they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please.²

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems, from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realised, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the quality, and in

the multiplicity of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory upon which the Poems were written.¹ But I was unwilling to undertake the task, knowing that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of reasoning him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display the opinions, and fully to enforce the arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to a preface. For, to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be something like impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held

forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakspeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which, by the act of writing in verse, an Author in the present day makes to his reader: but it will undoubtedly appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title.¹ I hope therefore the reader will not censure me for attempting to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonourable accusations which can be brought against an Author; namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life,

and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement.¹ (Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of Nature.² The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions.

not the strong side
of the human mind

3. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.*

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry 10 against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable 'to the Writer's own character than false 15 refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not 20 that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*.¹ If this 25 opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet.² For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems

* It is worth while here to observe, that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply.¹ For our continued influxes of feeling
5 are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our
10 feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a
15 nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose.
20 Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.²

25 A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting, that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is
30 capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint per-

*the feeling
the action
the situation*

ception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability.¹ It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves.² The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. — When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which

are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished
 5 success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not
 10 having performed what I never attempted.¹ The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose.² My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt
 15 the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a
 20 mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him like-
 25 wise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction;³ as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason
 30 already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men; and further, because the pleasure which I have

proposed to myself to impart, is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry.¹ Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject;² consequently, there is I hope in these Poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense:³ but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly treated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a Poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes.⁴

And it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written.¹ The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire:
 The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
 Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
 These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics;

it is equally obvious, that, except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word 'fruitless' for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and it was previously asserted, that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose.¹ We will go further. It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.² We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry * sheds no tears 'such as Angels weep,' but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

* I here use the word 'Poetry' (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre; nor is this, in truth, a *strict* antithesis, because lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer
5 that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction
10 far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind.¹
15 What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments: (for, if the Poet's subject be
20 judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the
25 intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and
30 figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions

where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded, that, whatever be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.¹

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him?² — He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and pas-

sions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves: — whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this 'faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him, must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an

entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs;¹ modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which *his* fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.²

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellencies of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure;³ who will converse with us as gravely about a *taste* for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all

writing:¹ it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion, truth which is its own testimony; which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. (Poetry is the image of man and nature.²) The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. (The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man.³ Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art.⁴ It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere, because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathise with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried

on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? (He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding every where objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention.¹ (He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature.) And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses

with general nature, with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. (Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science.) Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after.' He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying every where with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are every where; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as

immortal as the heart of man.¹ If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.²—It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.³

What has been thus far said applies to Poetry in general; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his character; and upon this point it appears to authorise the conclusion that there are

few persons of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet or belonging simply to Poets in general; to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their composition being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring the Reader to the description before given of a Poet. Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what was said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner.¹ But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the

sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. (The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions.) How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. 5 But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that 15 while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to metre; for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader, the distinction of 20 metre is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called POETIC DICTION, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices, upon which no calculation whatever can be made.¹ In the one case, the 25 Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet, respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion; whereas, in the other, the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is 30 made by them with the passion but such as the concurring

testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what has been already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me—to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned for attempting to superadd to such description, the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will hereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly underrate the

power of metre in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these Volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a still more naked and simple style, which have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. 5 Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished *chiefly* to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written 10 under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that 15 pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure; but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed 20 order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence 25 of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily con- 30 nected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and

hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, (there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose.) The metre of the old ballads is very artless; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion; and I hope, if the following Poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of *Clarissa Harlow*, or the *Gamester*; while Shakspeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure — an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement. — On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found some-

thing which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a SYSTEMATIC defence of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develop 5 the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the arts the object of accurate reflection; namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude.¹ This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our 15 ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of metre, and to show that metre 20 is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

(I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of 25 powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of re-action, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does 30 itself actually exist in the mind.²) In this mood successful

composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions
5 whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that, what-
10 ever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure
15 which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely — all these imperceptibly make
20 up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions.¹ This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions,
25 the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. All that it is *necessary* to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions,
30 either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in

verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.)

Having thus explained a few of my reasons for writing in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and for this reason a few words shall be added with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases, from which no man can altogether protect himself.¹ Hence I have no doubt, that, in some instances, feelings, even of the ludicrous, may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support; and, if he set them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all

confidence in itself, and become utterly debilitated.) To this it may be added, that the Critic ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and, perhaps, in a much greater degree: for there can be
 5 no presumption in saying of most readers, that it is not probable they will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and, above all, since they are so much
 10 less interested in the subject, they may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the Reader has been detained, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to Poetry, in which the language
 15 closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies, of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen: —

20 I put my hat upon my head
 And walked into the Strand,
 And there I met another man
 Whose hat was in his hand.

Immediately under these lines let us place one of the most justly-admired stanzas of the 'Babes in the Wood.'¹

25 These pretty Babes with hand in hand
 Went wandering up and down;
 But never more they saw the Man
 Approaching from the Town.

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned
 30 conversation. There are words in both, for example, 'the

Strand,' and 'the Town,' connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses, to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, this is a bad kind of poetry, or, this is not poetry; but, this wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can *lead* to any thing interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self-evident that he is not a man?

One request I must make of my reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others.¹ How common is it to hear a person say, I myself do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but, to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous! This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment, is almost universal: let the Reader then abide, independently, by his own feelings, and, if he finds himself affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author, by any single composition, has impressed

us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that on other occasions where we have been displeased, he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us, with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste: for an *accurate* taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long-continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself;) but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest, that, if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous; and that, in many cases, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what more can be done for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect, that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the

Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honourable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them: (we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased.) There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the Reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible for Poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected, but it has not been so much my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, as to offer reasons for presuming, that if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the

object which I had in view: he will determine how far it has been attained; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining: and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the
5 approbation of the Public.

APPENDIX,

See Preface, page 8, 'by what is usually called Poetic Diction'

1802-1845.

PERHAPS, as I have no right to expect that attentive perusal, without which, confined, as I have been, to the narrow limits of a Preface, my meaning cannot be thoroughly understood, I am anxious to give an exact notion of the sense in which the phrase poetic diction has been used; and for this purpose, a few words shall here be added, concerning the origin and characteristics of the phraseology, which I have condemned under that name. 5

The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative.¹ In succeeding times, Poets, and Men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language, and desirous of producing the same effect without being animated by the same passion, 15 set themselves to a mechanical adoption of these figures of speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and thoughts with which they had no natural connection whatsoever.² A language was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men in *any situation*. The Reader or Hearer of this distorted lan- 20

guage found himself in a perturbed and unusual state of mind: when affected by the genuine language of passion he had been in a perturbed and unusual state of mind also: in both cases he was willing that his common judgment
5 and understanding should be laid asleep, and he had no instinctive and infallible perception of the true to make him reject the false; the one served as a passport for the other. The emotion was in both cases delightful, and no wonder if he confounded the one with the other, and
10 believed them both to be produced by the same, or similar causes. (Besides, the Poet spake to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority.) Thus, and from a variety of other causes, this distorted language was received with admiration; and Poets, it is
15 probable, who had before contented themselves for the most part with misapplying only expressions which at first had been dictated by real passion, carried the abuse still further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of the original figurative language of passion, yet
20 altogether of their own invention, and characterised by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and Nature.¹

It is indeed true, that the language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ materially from ordinary language, because
25 it was the language of extraordinary occasions; but it was really spoken by men, language which the Poet himself had uttered when he had been affected by the events which he described, or which he had heard uttered by those around him. To this language it is probable that metre of
30 some sort or other was early superadded. This separated the genuine language of Poetry still further from common

life, so that whoever read or heard the poems of these earliest Poets felt himself moved in a way in which he had not been accustomed to be moved in real life, and by causes manifestly different from those which acted upon him in real life. This was the great temptation to all the corruptions which have followed: under the protection of this feeling succeeding Poets constructed a phraseology which had one thing, it is true, in common with the genuine language of poetry, namely, that it was not heard in ordinary conversation; that it was unusual. But the first Poets, as I have said, spake a language which, though unusual, was still the language of men. This circumstance, however, was disregarded by their successors; they found that they could please by easier means: they became proud of modes of expression which they themselves had invented, and which were uttered only by themselves. In process of time metre became a symbol or promise of this unusual language, and whoever took upon him to write in metre, according as he possessed more or less of true poetic genius, introduced less or more of this adulterated phraseology into his compositions, and the true and the false were inseparably interwoven until, the taste of men becoming gradually perverted, this language was received as a natural language: and at length by the influence of books upon men, did to a certain degree really become so. Abuses of this kind were imported from one nation to another, and with the progress of refinement this diction became daily more and more corrupt, thrusting out of sight the plain humanities of Nature by a motley masquerade of tricks, quaintnesses, hieroglyphics, and enigmas.

It would not be uninteresting to point out the causes of

the pleasure given by this extravagant and absurd diction. It depends upon a great variety of causes, but upon none, perhaps, more than its influence in impressing a notion of the peculiarity and exaltation of the Poet's character, and
 5 in flattering the Reader's self-love by bringing him nearer to a sympathy with that character; an effect which is accomplished by unsettling ordinary habits of thinking, and thus assisting the Reader to approach to that perturbed and dizzy state of mind in which if he does not find
 10 himself, he imagines that he is *balked* of a peculiar enjoyment which poetry can and ought to bestow.

The sonnet quoted from Gray, in the Preface, except the lines printed in Italics, consists of little else but this diction, though not of the worst kind; and indeed, if one
 15 may be permitted to say so, it is far too common in the best writers both ancient and modern. Perhaps in no way, by positive example, could more easily be given a notion of what I mean by the phrase *poetic diction* than by referring to a comparison between the metrical paraphrase
 20 which we have of passages in the Old and New Testament, and those passages as they exist in our common Translation. See Pope's 'Messiah' throughout; Prior's 'Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue,' &c., &c., 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,'
 25 &c., &c. 1st Corinthians, chap. xiii. By way of immediate example, take the following of Dr. Johnson: —

Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
 Observe her labours, Sluggard, and be wise;
 No stern command, no monitory voice,
 Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice;

Yet, timely provident, she hastes away
 To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day;
 When fruitful Summer loads the teeming plain,
 She crops the harvest, and she stores the grain.
 How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours, 5
 Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
 While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
 And soft solicitation courts repose,
 Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
 Year chases year with unremitted flight, 10
 Till Want now following, fraudulent and slow,
 Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambush'd foe.

From this hubbub of words pass to the original. 'Go to
 the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise:
 which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her 15
 meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.
 How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? When wilt thou
 arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
 a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty
 come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed 20
 man.' Proverbs, chap. vi.

One more quotation, and I have done. It is from
 Cowper's Verses supposed to be written by Alexander
 Selkirk:—

Religion! what treasure untold 25
 Resides in that heavenly word!
 More precious than silver and gold,
 Or all that this earth can afford.
 But the sound of the church-going bell
 These valleys and rocks never heard, 30
 Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
 Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
 Convey to this desolate shore
 Some cordial endearing report
 Of a land I must visit no more.
 5 My Friends, do they now and then send
 A wish or a thought after me?
 O tell me I yet have a friend,
 Though a friend I am never to see.

This passage is quoted as an instance of three different
 10 styles of composition. The first four lines are poorly
 expressed; some Critics would call the language prosaic;
 the fact is, it would be bad prose, so bad, that it is
 scarcely worse in metre. The epithet 'church-going'
 applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper,
 15 is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have
 introduced into their language, till they and their Readers
 take them as matters of course, if they do not single them
 out expressly as objects of admiration. The two lines
 'Ne'er sigh'd at the sound,' &c., are, in my opinion, an
 20 instance of the language of passion wrested from its proper
 use, and, from the mere circumstance of the composition
 being in metre, applied upon an occasion that does not
 justify such violent expressions; and I should condemn the
 passage, though perhaps few Readers will agree with me,
 25 as vicious poetic diction. The last stanza is throughout
 admirably expressed: it would be equally good whether in
 prose or verse, except that the Reader has an exquisite
 pleasure in seeing such natural language so naturally con-
 nected with metre. The beauty of this stanza tempts me
 30 to conclude with a principle which ought never to be lost
 sight of, and which has been my chief guide in all I have

said, — namely, that in works of *imagination and sentiment*,
for of these only have I been treating, in proportion as
ideas and feelings are valuable, (whether the composition
be in prose or in verse, they require and exact one and the
same language.) Metre is but ^{EXTRINSIC} adventitious to composition, 5
and the phraseology for which that passport is necessary,
even where it may be graceful at all, will be little valued
by the judicious:)

PREFACE,

1815-1845.

THE powers requisite for the production of poetry are: first, those of Observation and Description, — *i.e.*, the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified
5 by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer: whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. This power, though indispensable to a Poet, is one which he employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a
10 continuance of time: as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects, much in the same way as a translator or engraver ought to be to his original. 2ndly, Sensibility, — which, the more exquisite it is, the wider
15 will be the range of a poet's perceptions; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves, and as re-acted upon by his own mind. (The distinction between poetic and human sensibility has been marked in the character of the Poet delineated in the
20 original preface.) 3dly, Reflection, — which makes the Poet acquainted with the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their

connection with each other. (4thly, Imagination and Fancy, — to modify, to create, and to associate.) (5thly, Invention, — by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment, — to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of the faculties ought to be exerted; so that the less shall not be sacrificed to the greater; nor the greater, slighting the less, arrogate, to its own injury, more than its due. By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition.*

The materials of Poetry, by these powers collected and produced, are cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms. The moulds may be enumerated, and the forms specified, in the following order.¹ 1st, the Narrative, — including the Epopœia, the Historic Poem, the Tale, the Romance, the Mock-Heroic, and, if the spirit of Homer will tolerate such neighbourhood, that dear production of our days, the metrical Novel. Of this class, the distinguishing mark is, that the Narrator, however liberally his speaking agents be introduced, is himself the source from which every thing primarily flows.) Epic Poets, in order that their mode of composition may accord with the elevation of their subject, represent themselves as *singing*

* As sensibility to harmony of numbers, and the power of producing it, are invariably attendants upon the faculties above specified, nothing has been said upon those requisites.

from the inspiration of the Muse, 'Arma virumque *cano*;' but this is a fiction, in modern times, of slight value; the 'Iliad' or the 'Paradise Lost' would gain little in our estimation by being chanted. The other poets who belong
 5 to this class are commonly content to tell their tale; — so that of the whole it may be affirmed that they neither require nor reject the accompaniment of music.

II 2ndly, The Dramatic, — consisting of Tragedy, Historic Drama, Comedy, and Masque, in which the poet does
 10 not appear at all in his own person, and where the whole action is carried on by speech and dialogue of the agents; music being admitted only incidentally and rarely.) The Opera may be placed here, inasmuch as it proceeds by dialogue; though depending, to the degree that it does,
 15 upon music, it has strong claim to be ranked with the lyrical. The characteristic and impassioned Epistle, of which Ovid and Pope have given examples, considered as a species of monodrama, may, without impropriety, be placed in this class.

III 3dly, The Lyrical, — containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the
 , production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable.)

IV 4thly, The Idyllium, — descriptive chiefly either of the
 25 processes and appearances of external nature, as the 'Seasons' of Thomson; or of characters, manners, and sentiments, as are Shenstone's 'Schoolmistress,' 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' of Burns, 'The Twa Dogs' of the same Author; or of these in conjunction with the appearances
 30 of Nature, as most of the pieces of Theocritus, the 'Allegro' and 'Penseroso' of Milton, Beattie's 'Minstrel,' Gold-

smith's 'Deserted Village.' (The Epitaph, the Inscription, the Sonnet, most of the epistles of poets writing in their own persons, and all loco-descriptive poetry, belong to this class.)

5thly, (Didactic,—the principal object of which is direct instruction;) as the Poem of Lucretius, the 'Georgics' of Virgil, 'The Fleece' of Dyer, Mason's 'English Garden,' &c.

And, lastly, philosophical Satire, like that of Horace and Juvenal; personal and occasional Satire rarely comprehending sufficient of the general in the individual to be dignified with the name of poetry.

Out of the three last has been constructed a composite order of which Young's 'Night Thoughts,' and Cowper's 'Task,' are excellent examples. (It is deducible from the above, that poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate.) From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes;¹ which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. My guiding wish was, that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a twofold view; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the

philosophical Poem, 'The Recluse.' This arrangement has long presented itself habitually to my own mind. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded
 5 that, by the plan adopted, any thing material would be taken from the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting Reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this; while, for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve
 10 as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. [But, as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the Reader, that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind,
 15 in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them; *predominant*, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. (Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and *vice versa*.) Both the above classes might
 20 without impropriety have been enlarged from that consisting of 'Poems founded on the Affections;' as might this latter from those, and from the class 'proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection.' The most striking characteristics of each piece, mutual illustration, variety, and pro-
 25 portion, have governed me throughout.]

None of the other Classes, except those of Fancy and Imagination, require any particular notice. But a remark of general application may be made. All Poets, except
 30 their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre: with what degree of affectation this has been done in

modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the Reader's charity. Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves; the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible, — the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification, — as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem; — in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. — But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman;

He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

Let us come now to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following Poems.¹ 'A man,' says an intelligent author, 'has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which images within the mind the phenomena of sensation.' A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (*φαντάζειν*)

is to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. (Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy
 5 by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterised. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and
 10 striking will be the decorations produced.' — *British Synonyms discriminated*, by W. Taylor.

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation, as to conclude his task
 15 without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide and escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without
 20 liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. (It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two
 25 words bear the above meaning and no other, what term is left to designate that faculty of which the Poet is 'all compact;' he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise Fancy, as
 30 insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity? Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving

title to a class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot *hangs* from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his farm, thus addresses his goats:—

Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
Dumosa *pendere* procul de rupe videbo.

————— half way down

Hangs one who gathers samphire,

is the well-known expression of Shakspeare, delineating an ordinary image upon the cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word: neither the goats nor the samphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging. |

As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial wind;
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate or Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the Pole; so seemed
Far off the flying Fiend.

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image: First, the fleet, an aggregate of many ships, is represented as one mighty person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratification of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime objects to which it is compared.

From impressions of sight we will pass to those of sound; which, as they must necessarily be of a less definite character, shall be selected from these volumes:

Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove *broods*;
 15 of the same bird,

His voice was *buried* among trees,
 Yet to be come at by the breeze;
 O, Cuckoo! shall I call thee *Bird*,
 Or but a wandering *Voice*?

The stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. 'His voice was buried among the trees,' a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this Bird is marked; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and the pierc-

ing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade; yet a note so peculiar and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shades in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

5

Shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence; the Imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

10

Thus far of images independent of each other and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to re-act upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.

20

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a consideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The Reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the shepherd

25

30

contemplating it from the seclusion of the cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffected the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected
 5 with, and opposed to, each other!

{ As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
 Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
 Wonder to all who do the same espy
 By what means it could thither come, and whence,
 10 So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
 Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
 Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun himself.

{ Such seemed this Man; not all alive or dead
 Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.

 15 { Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
 And moveth altogether if it move at all.

{ In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the
 modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and
 20 mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The
 stone is endowed with something of the power of life to
 approximate it to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped
 of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone;
 which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose
 25 of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a
 nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged
 Man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life
 and motion as to bring him to the point where the two
 | objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After
 30 what has been said, the image of the cloud need not be
 commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power: but the Imagination also shapes and *creates*; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number, — alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage already cited from Milton. When the compact Fleet, as one Person, has been introduced 'Sailing from Bengala.' 'They,' *i.e.* the 'merchants,' representing the fleet resolved into a multitude of ships, 'ply' their voyage towards the extremities of the earth: 'So' (referring to the word 'As' in the commencement) 'seemed the flying Fiend;' the image of his person acting to recombine the multitude of ships into one body, — the point from which the comparison set out. 'So seemed,' and to whom seemed? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the Poet's mind, and to that of the Reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions!

Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.

Here again this mighty Poet, — speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from heaven the rebellious angels,

Attended by ten thousand thousand Saints
He onward came: far off his coming shone, —

the retinue of Saints, and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the splendour of that indefinite abstraction 'His coming!'

[As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present Volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the Reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters, and determines the course of actions: I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed Friends, 'draws all things to one; which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect.'* (The grand store-houses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contradistinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton; to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser.) I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome, because the anthropomorphism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create persons out of abstractions; and, at another, by a superior effort of ge-

* Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.

nus, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations, — of which his character of *Una* is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the 5 works of Shakspeare are an inexhaustible source.

I tax not you, ye *Elements*, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you *Daughters*!

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention; yet 10 justified by recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapable and the presumptuous, have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above 15 stated does not justify me) that I have given in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling ten- 20 dency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

To the mode in which *Fancy* has already been characterised as the power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, 'the aggregative and 25 associative power,' my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the *Fancy*; but either the materials evoked and combined are different; or they are brought together under a differ- 30

ent law, and for a different purpose. (Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough
 5 for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these, are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from every thing but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

10

In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
 On the fore-finger of an alderman.)

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high;
 15 or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas; — because these, and if they were a million times as high it would be the same, are bounded: The expression is, 'His stature reached the sky!' the illimitable firmament! — When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does
 20 not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows — and continues to grow — upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and
 25 outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties: moreover, the images invariably modify each other. — The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic,
 30 as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortu-

nately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value; or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities.¹ If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion; the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished. Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal. Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalry with Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can be opened that shall not afford examples. — Referring the Reader to those inestimable volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from the 'Paradise Lost:'

The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the sun.

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other
appearances of sympathising Nature, thus marks the imme-
5 diate consequence,

Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion of the mortal sin.

The associating link is the same in each instance: Dew
and rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of
10 tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of
surprise is the effect in the former case; a flash of surprise,
and nothing more; for the nature of things does not sus-
tain the combination. In the latter, the effects from the
act, of which there is this immediate consequence and
15 visible sign, are so momentous, that the mind acknowl-
edges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in
nature so manifested; and the sky weeps drops of water
as if with human eyes, as 'Earth had before trembled from
her entrails, and Nature given a second groan.'

20 Finally, I will refer to Cotton's 'Ode upon Winter,' an
admirable composition, though stained with some pecu-
liarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illus-
tration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part
of this ode contains a most lively description of the
25 entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as 'A palsied king,'
and yet a military monarch, — advancing for conquest with
his army; the several bodies of which, and their arms and
equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a
profusion of *fanciful* comparisons, which indicate on the

part of the poet extreme activity of intellect, and a correspondent hurry of delightful feeling. Winter retires from the foe into his fortress, where

—— a magazine

Of sovereign juice is cellared in;

5

Liquor that will the siege maintain

Should Phœbus ne'er return again.

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in the treatment of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms. 10

'Tis that, that gives the poet rage,
And thaws the gelly'd blood of age;
Matures the young, restores the old,
And makes the fainting coward bold.

15

It lays the careful head to rest,
Calms palpitations in the breast,
Renders our lives' misfortune sweet;

.

Then let the chill Sirocco blow,
And gird us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistle to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar,

20

Whilst we together jovial sit
Careless, and crowned with mirth and wit,
Where, though bleak winds confine us home,
Our fancies round the world shall roam.

25

We'll think of all the Friends we know,
And drink to all worth drinking to;
When having drunk all thine and mine,
We rather shall want healths than wine.

30



But where Friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our charity;
Men that remote in sorrows live,
Shall by our lusty brimmers thrive.

5 We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
And those that languish into health,
The afflicted into joy; th' opprest
Into security and rest.

10 The worthy in disgrace shall find
Favour return again more kind,
And in restraint who stifled lie,
Shall taste the air of liberty.

15 The brave shall triumph in success,
The lovers shall have mistresses,
Poor unregarded Virtue, praise,
And the neglected Poet, bays.

20 Thus shall our healths do others good,
Whilst we ourselves do all we would;
For, freed from envy and from care,
What would we be but what we are?

When I sate down to write this Preface, it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive; but, thinking that I ought rather to apologise for detaining the reader so long, I will here conclude.

ESSAY SUPPLEMENTARY TO PREFACE,

1815-1845

WITH the young of both sexes, Poetry is, like love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself; — the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, 5 or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement. In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to 10 poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life.¹ And, lastly, there are many, who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature; in which poetry has continued to be comprehended 15 as a study.²

Into the above classes the Readers of poetry may be divided; Critics abound in them all; but from the last 20 only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. (The young, who in nothing can escape

delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with Poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry, (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science,) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the senses, and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged obligation prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for them whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason! — When a juvenile Reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts — is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and, no doubt, eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations, the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent;¹ or, if these errors

always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest and ingenious. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem fall in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life.¹ As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burden of business, and with a wish to

forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

✓ If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus
 5 easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagancies, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their former selves also in
 10 strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style.¹ In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination.² Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies
 15 them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments.³ But it is a well-known property of human nature, that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various degrees of distinctness. Is it
 20 not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work, the colouring of which is
 25 disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony?⁴ (It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can *serve* (i.e. obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.)

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it
 30 administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion,⁵ they who have learned to perceive this truth, and

who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes,
 must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the
 two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering,
 are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight
 of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly;
 and its sympathies become so exclusive, that many species
 of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite
 its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral
 inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which
 they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes
peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to
 the truths which interest them, they are prone to over-rate
 the Authors by whom those truths are expressed and
 enforced. They come prepared to impart so much pas-
 sion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious
 how little, in fact, they receive from it. And, on the other
 hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous
 a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tre-
 mendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon
 religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only
 cannot sympathise with them, however animated the expres-
 sion, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all
 satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is
 converted into dislike; and the heart of the Reader is set
 against the Author and his book. — To these excesses,
 they, who from their professions ought to be the most
 guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean
 those sects whose religion, being from the calculating
 understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity,
 the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest
 faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradic-

tions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled, as they are and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious;—and at all seasons, they are 'under temptation to supply, by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity:—the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a resumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an 'imperfect shadowing forth' of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. (In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry; between religion—making up the deficiencies of reason by faith; and poetry—passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription, and reconciled to substitutions; and poetry—ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation.) In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error;

—so. that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species, the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of the art have gone farther astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness; and for active faculties, capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them, associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it?—among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed—that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trustworthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For (to be mistaught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should

they generalise rightly, to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield
 5 to one of higher order. In it are found critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany, — confounded if he turn quick upon the wing,
 10 dismayed if he soar steadily 'into the region;' — men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives; — judges, whose censure is auspi-
 15 cious, and whose praise ominous!¹ In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only on this account, I would
 20 invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits
 25 — must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them; it will be further found, that when Authors shall have at length
 30 raised themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed con-

cerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which 5 owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes; — a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when 10 he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.¹

Who is there that now reads the 'Creation' of Dubartas? 15 Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the 'Faery Queen' faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known 20 beyond the limits of the British Isles. And if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed. 25

The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets *sage* —

are his own words; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy: while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been *their* best friend. But 30

he was a great power, and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.¹

A dramatic Author, if he write for the stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakspeare was listened to. The people were delighted: but I am not sufficiently versed in stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic writers, that Shakspeare, like his predecessors Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakspeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception

upon the stage, made but little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him.*—His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakspeare's. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice. 5 10

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: 'the English, with their bouffon de Shakspeare,' is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French theatre; an advantage which the Parisian critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a 15 20 25

* The learned Hakewill (a third edition of whose book bears date 1635), writing to refute the error 'touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay,' cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bargas, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.

superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be 'a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties.' How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous poems, in which Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though in no part of the writings of this Poet is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an* act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of those little pieces, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in them: and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall

* This flippant insensibility was publicly reprehended by Mr. Coleridge in a course of Lectures upon Poetry given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakspeare's Sonnets, see Numbers, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others.

into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions—‘there sitting where he durst not soar.’

Nine years before the death of Shakspeare, Milton was born: and early in life he published several small poems, 5 which, though on their first appearance were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope in his youth could borrow from them without risk of its being known. Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated, I will not undertake to 10 decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the 15 most popular of those pieces. At all events, it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell’s Life of him, was in 20 the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Steevens wrote upon those of Shakspeare.

About the time when the Pindaric odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious 25 thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the ‘Paradise Lost’ made its appearance. ‘Fit audience find though few,’ was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more 30 than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson

has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were '*just to it*' upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he
5 asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them had raised him many enemies, they had procured him
10 numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. Take, from the number of purchasers, persons of this class, and also those who wished to
15 possess the Poem as a religious work, and but few I fear would be left who sought for it on account of its poetical merits. The demand did not immediately increase; 'for,' says Dr. Johnson, 'many more readers' (he means persons in the habit of reading poetry) 'than were supplied at first the
20 Nation did not afford.' How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to belie it! Turning to my-own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, seventh edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, fourth edition, 1686; Waller, fifth edition,
25 same date. The Poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know; but I well remember, that, twenty-five years ago, the book-sellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley.
30 This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable man; but merely to show — that, if Milton's

work were not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. The early editions of 'Paradise Lost' were printed in a shape which allowed them to be sold at a low price, yet only three thousand copies of the Work were sold in eleven years; and the Nation, says Dr. 5 Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the Works of Shakspeare; which probably did not together make one thousand Copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the 'paucity of Readers.' — There were readers in multitudes; 10 but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorized, then, to affirm, that the reception of the 'Paradise Lost,' and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to estab- 15 lish are not erroneous.* — How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies or trading Journalist of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, every where impreg- 20 nated with *original* excellence.

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles† in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have 25

* Hughes is express upon this subject: in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers, he writes thus. 'It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful Edition of "Paradise Lost" that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed.'

† This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularises only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftsbury, an author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet ling in their cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of those arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that Nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those

Eclogues which their author intended to be burlesque. The instigator of the work, and his admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, 'of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded.' The Pastorals, ludicrous to such as prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages, 'became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations.'

Something less than sixty years after the publication of the 'Paradise Lost' appeared Thomson's 'Winter;' which was speedily followed by his other 'Seasons.' It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? 'It was no sooner read,' says one of his contemporary biographers, 'than universally admired; those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for anything in poetry, beyond a *point of satirical or epigrammatic wit*, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing any thing new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to Nature and his own genius. But, in a short

time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowings of a
5 tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man.'

This case appears to bear strongly against us: — but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration.
10 The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of Nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting the nocturnal 'Reverie' of
15 Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the 'Windsor Forest,' of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the 'Paradise Lost' and the 'Seasons' does not contain a single new image of external Nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it
20 can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style
25 in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the 'Iliad.' A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily
30 depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines

are vague, bombastic, and senseless;* those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation, — nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity!—If these two distinguished writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of Nature, were not at that time holden in much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to those appearances.

(Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was *in such good condition* at the time of the publication of the 'Seasons,' the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases

* CORTES *alone in a night-gown.*

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead;
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head.
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.

DRYDEN'S *Indian Emperor.*

where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little more; though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception, that many would often fancy
 5 they recognised a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shown that much of what his biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind wonderment—how is the rest to be accounted for?—Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which
 10 seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with senti-
 15 mental common-places, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of the 'Seasons' the book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories (perhaps 'Damon and Musidora'); these also
 20 are prominent in our collections of Extracts, and are the parts of his Work, which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him
 25 'an elegant and philosophical poet;' nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson's genius as an imaginative poet* were

* Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the second edition of his 'Seasons,' and find that even *that* does not contain the most striking passages which Warton points out for admiration; these with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.

perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years after the publication of the 'Seasons,' pointed them out by a note in his Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope. In the 'Castle of Indolence' (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious, and diction more pure. Yet that fine poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a few!

When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets in an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon *him* who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his life-time was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the 'Seasons' of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*; collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales, that appeared not long after its publication; and had been modelled, as the authors persuaded themselves, after the old Ballad.

The Compilation was however ill suited to the then existing taste of city society; and Dr. Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this country, into temporary neglect; while Bürger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating, or imitating these *Reliques*, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of 'Sir Cauline' and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the 'Hermit of Warkworth,' a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact* with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man

* Shenstone, in his 'Schoolmistress,' gives a still more remarkable instance of this timidity. On its first appearance, (See D'Israeli's 2d Series of the *Curiosities of Literature*) the Poem was accompanied with an absurd prose commentary, showing, as indeed some incongruous expressions in the text imply, that the whole was intended for burlesque. In subsequent editions, the commentary was dropped, and the People have since continued to read in seriousness, doing for the Author what he had not courage openly to venture upon for himself.

by whom in modern times it has been cultivated. That even Bürger (to whom Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Goethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shown from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe, 10
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe :

And soone she heard her true Love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my dear Ladye, 15
'Tis I thy true-love call.

Which is thus tricked out and dilated :

Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen überall 20
Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafen war;
Doch nur das Fräulein immerdar
Voll Fieberangst, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte : 25
Da horch ! Ein süsser Liebeston
Kam leis' empor geflogen.
'Ho, Trüdchen, ho ! Da bin ich schon !
Frisch auf ! Dich angezogen !'

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics. 30
All hail, Macpherson ! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian ! The

Phantom was begotten by the smug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition — it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the *Reliques* had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention, by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable! how selfish his conduct, contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance! — Open this far-famed Book! — I have done so at random, and the beginning of the ‘Epic Poem Temora,’ in eight Books, presents itself. ‘The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds.’ Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion. — Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian. From what I saw

with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In Nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness.) In Macpherson's work, it is exactly the reverse; every thing (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened, —yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeps of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Car-borne heroes; — of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface. — Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shown that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his '*ands*' and '*buts!*' and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, and Shakspeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Staël, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived

from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own. — It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland; — a country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill-omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

10 (Yet, much as those pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no author, in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them) — except the boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon Poems*, — counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island, is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless. Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the *Reliques* of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions! — I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I

do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the *Reliques*; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of authors to be admitted into a body of the most eminent, from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley!—What is become of the morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation? Or, if names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? Where is Spenser? where Sidney? and, lastly, where he, whose rights as a poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a dramatist, we have vindicated,—where Shakspeare?—These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we

have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and 5 King, and Spratt — Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates — metrical writers utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a 10 considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of 15 this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced, that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare 20 them; but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes? — The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of 25 these poems were first published, seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and 30 all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame has been given; and, as far as con-

cerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour 5 and pains, which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression, though widely different in value;—they are all proofs that for the present time I 10 have not laboured in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical Works, it is this, — (that every, 15 author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed; so has it been, so will it continue to be.) This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I 20 have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his 25 own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the preju- 30 dices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of

inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each
5 other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on
10 men who may stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here. — TASTE, I would
15 remind the reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them.¹ It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body,
20 and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive, — to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, Imagination, has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance
25 of Taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable, being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy, — which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a pre-
30 sumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word,

Imagination; but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office; — for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime; — are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor — *Taste*. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliary impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering*; but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry! — But,

Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
Itself discharges on its foes.

(To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its

suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid, — and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original writer, at his first appearance in the world.

10 — Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and benefit of human nature.¹ Genius is the

15 introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an

20 advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the poet? Is it to be supposed that the reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian prince or general — stretched on his palanquin, and borne by his slaves? No; he is invigorated and inspirited by his leader, in order that he may exert

25 himself; for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power,² of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem — that, if the springs of this emotion were

30 genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the

facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. (But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some—to which the heart yields with gentleness; others—against which it struggles with pride; these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected—is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself—but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime,—if we consider what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word *popular*, applied to new works in poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all men should run after its productions, as if urged by an

appetite, or constrained by a spell!—The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in every thing which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness, or to be made conscious of her power:—wherever life and Nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic enunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.—Grand thoughts (and Shakspeare must often have sighed over this truth), as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits, without some violation of their sanctity. ¶ Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the Sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. ¶ Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind

or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age; whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal, the individual quickly *perishes*; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty, — with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole, that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and, could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above — that, of *good* poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*.¹ And how does it survive but through the People? What preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

— Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge — MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox Populi which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry — transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is anything of divine infallibility in the

clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes
5 that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence,
10 is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them — that, if he were not persuaded that the contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evince something of the 'Vision and the Faculty divine;' and that,
15 both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments
20 they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction; — from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.¹

1806
15

LETTER TO LADY BEAUMONT.



COLEORTON, May 21, 1807.

MY DEAR LADY BEAUMONT,

Though I am to see you so soon, I cannot but write a word or two, to thank you for the interest you take in my poems, as evinced by your solicitude about their immediate reception. I write partly to thank you for this, and to express the pleasure it has given me, and partly to remove any uneasiness from your mind which the disappointments you sometimes meet with, in this labour of love, may occasion. I see that you have many battles to fight for me,—more than, in the ardour and confidence of your pure and elevated mind, you had ever thought of being summoned to; but be assured that this opposition is nothing more than what I distinctly foresaw that you and my other friends would have to encounter. I say this, not to give myself credit for an eye of prophecy, but to allay any vexatious thoughts on my account which this opposition may have produced in you.

It is impossible that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the immediate effect of this little work upon what is called the public. I do not here take into consideration the envy and malevolence, and all the bad passions which always stand in the way of a work of any

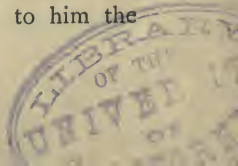
merit from a living poet ;¹ but merely think of the pure, absolute, honest ignorance in which all worldlings of every rank and situation must be enveloped, with respect to the thoughts, feelings, and images, on which the life of my poems depends. The things which I have taken, whether
 5 from within or without, what have they to do with routs, dinners, morning calls, hurry from door to door, from street to street, on foot or in carriage ; with Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, Mr. Paul or Sir Francis Burdett, the Westminster election
 10 or the borough of Honiton ? In a word — for I cannot stop to make my way through the hurry of images that present themselves to me — what have they to do with endless talking about things nobody cares anything for except as far as their own vanity is concerned, and this with persons they
 15 care nothing for but as their vanity or *selfishness* is concerned ? — what have they to do (to say all at once) with a life without love ? In such a life there can be no thought ;
 ✓ for we have no thought (save thoughts of pain) but as far as we have love and admiration.

20 It is an awful truth, that there neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world² — among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society.
 25 This is a truth, and an awful one, because to be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God.

Upon this I shall insist elsewhere ; at present let me confine myself to my object, which is to make you, my dear
 30 friend, as easy-hearted as myself with respect to these poems. Trouble not yourself upon their present reception ;

of what moment is that compared with what I trust is their destiny? — to console the afflicted ; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier ; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous ; 5 this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform, long after we (that is, all that is mortal of us) are mouldered in our graves. ~~1~~ I am well aware how far it would seem to many I overrate my own exertions, when I speak in this way, in direct connection with the volume I have just made 10 public.

I am not, however, afraid of such censure, insignificant as probably the majority of those poems would appear to very respectable persons. I do not mean London wits and witlings, for these have too many foul passions about them to 15 be respectable, even if they had more intellect than the benign laws of Providence will allow to such a heartless existence as theirs is ; but grave, kindly-natured, worthy persons, who would be pleased if they could. I hope that these volumes are not without some recommendations, even 20 for readers of this class : but their imagination has slept ; and the voice which is the voice of my poetry, without imagination, cannot be heard. Leaving these, I was going to say a word to such readers as Mr. —. Such ! — how would he be offended if he knew I considered him only as 25 a representative of a class, and not an unique ! ‘Pity,’ says Mr. — ‘that so many trifling things should be admitted to obstruct the view of those that have merit.’ Now, let this candid judge take, by way of example, the sonnets, which, probably, with the exception of two or three other 30 poems, for which I will not contend, appear to him the



most trifling, as they are the shortest. I would say to him, omitting things of higher consideration, there is one thing which must strike you at once, if you will only read these poems, — that those '*to Liberty*,' at least, have a connection with, or a bearing upon, each other; and, therefore, if individually they want weight, perhaps, as a body, they may not be so deficient. At least, this ought to induce you to suspend your judgment, and qualify it so far as to allow that the writer aims at least at comprehensiveness.

10 But, dropping this, I would boldly say at once, that these sonnets, while they each fix the attention upon some important sentiment, separately considered, do, at the same time, collectively make a poem on the subject of civil liberty and national independence, which, either for simplicity of style
15 or grandeur of moral sentiment, is, alas! likely to have few parallels in the poetry of the present day.¹ Again, turn to the '*Moods of my own Mind*.' There is scarcely a poem here of above thirty lines, and very trifling these poems will appear to many; but, omitting to speak of them individually,
20 do they not, taken collectively, fix the attention upon a subject eminently poetical, viz., the interest which objects in Nature derive from the predominance of certain affections, more or less permanent, more or less capable of salutary renewal in the mind of the being contemplating these
25 objects? This is poetic, and essentially poetic. And why? Because it is creative. . . .

My letter (as this second sheet, which I am obliged to take, admonishes me) is growing to an enormous length; and yet, saving that I have expressed my calm confidence
30 that these poems will live, I have said nothing which has a particular application to the object of it, which was to

remove all disquiet from your mind on account of the condemnation they may at present incur from that portion of my contemporaries who are called the public. I am sure, my dear Lady Beaumont, if you attach any importance to it, it can only be from an apprehension that it may affect 5 me, upon which I have already set you at ease; or from a fear that this present blame is ominous of their future or final destiny. If this be the case, your tenderness for me betrays you. Be assured that the decision of these persons has nothing to do with the question; they are altogether 10 incompetent judges. These people, in the senseless hurry of their idle lives, do not *read* books, they merely snatch a glance at them, that they may talk about them.¹ And even if this were not so, never forget what, I believe, was observed to you by Coleridge, that every great and original 15 writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen; this, in a certain degree, even to all persons, however wise and pure may be their lives, and however unvitiated their taste. But for 20 those who dip into books in order to give an opinion of them, or talk about them to take up an opinion—for this multitude of unhappy, and misguided, and misguiding beings, an entire regeneration must be produced; and if this be possible, it must be a work *of time*. To conclude, my ears 25 are stone-dead to this idle buzz, and my flesh as insensible as iron to these petty stings; and, after what I have said, I am sure yours will be the same. I doubt not that you will share with me an invincible confidence that my writings (and among them these little poems) will co-operate with 30 the benign tendencies in human nature and society, wher-

ever found ; and that they will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier.¹ Farewell !

I will not apologise for this letter, though its length demands an apology. Believe me, eagerly wishing for the happy day

5 when I shall see you and Sir George here,

Most affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

NOTES.



PREFACE (1800-1845).

PAGE 1, l. 7. 1. Cf. "Advertisement," *Lyrical Ballads* (1798): "The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure."

Line 16. 2. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "Wordsworth": "I firmly believe that the poetical performance of Wordsworth is, after that of Shakespeare and Milton, of which all the world now recognizes the worth, undoubtedly the most considerable in our language from the Elizabethan age to the present time."

Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 162: "I cannot likewise but add that the comparison of such poems of merit as have been given to the public within the last ten or twelve years, with the majority of those produced previously to the appearance of that Preface, leave no doubt in my mind that Mr. Wordsworth is fully justified in believing his efforts to have been by no means ineffectual."

Pater, *Appreciations*, 40: "Those who have undergone his (Wordsworth's) influence are like people who have passed through some initiation, a *disciplina Arcani*, by submitting to which they become able constantly to distinguish in art, speech, feeling, manners, that which is organic, animated, expressive, from that which is only conventional, derivative, inexpressive."

P. 2, l. 3. 1. Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 36: "In the critical remarks, prefixed and annexed to the *Lyrical Ballads*, I believe that we

may safely rest, as the true origin of the unexampled opposition which Mr. Wordsworth's writings have been since doomed to encounter."

Knight, *Life of Wordsworth*, X., 329: "The Preface was written at the request of Mr. Coleridge." — W. W.

P. 3, l. 18. 1. These lines are from "Advertisement" to *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Cf. Robertson, *Lectures and Addresses*, 92: "But of course if you lead a sensual life, or a mercenary or artificial life, you will not read these truths in nature. A pure heart and a simple, manly life alone can reveal to you all that which seer and poet saw."

Sir Henry Taylor, *Critical Essays on Poetry*, 46: "For an ear which knows of no other rhythmical music than the unqualified up and down movement of trochees and iambs, or the canter of anapests, the 'numerous verse' of Wordsworth will have been modulated in vain."

P. 4, l. 10. 1. These lines were written in 1802 and are the development of the following, written in 1798 and 1800 respectively: "The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure." — *Advertisement* (1798).

"The principal object, then, which I proposed to myself in these poems was to make the incidents of common life interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature, chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement." — *Preface* (1800).

"The knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition." — JOHNSON, *Rasselas*.

"Imitative art in its highest form — poetry — is an expression of the universal element in human life." — ARISTOTLE, *Poetics*.

L. 23. 2. "There is nothing that exists, except things ignoble and mean, in which the true poet may not find himself at home, — in the open sights of nature, in the occult secrets of science, in the *quicquid agunt homines*, in men's character and fortunes, in their actions and sufferings, their joys and sorrows. . . . Those who are familiar with the poor know how much of that feeling language, which is the essence of poetry, may be heard under cottage roofs." — SHAIRP, *Aspects of Poetry*.

"In every parish there is a whole Iliad of action and of passion, if we have been taught to trace their workings by one of those men whom nature has chosen for her expositors." — DE VERE, *Essays, Literary and Ethical*.

"Poetry is essentially of the people and for the people." — F. W. ROBERTSON, *Lectures and Addresses*.

Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 168: "To this I reply that a rustic's language, purified from all provincialism and grossness, and so far reconstructed as to be made consistent with the rules of grammar, will not differ from the language of any other man of common sense, however learned or refined he may be, except so far as the notions which the rustic has to convey are fewer and more indiscriminate."

P. 5, l. 9. 1. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 19: "And the poet, instead of adopting the approved diction of poets, or coining tropes and images of his own, cannot do better than adopt the language of genuine emotion, as it comes warm from the lips of suffering men and women."

L. 25. 2. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 22: "The impulse to poetic composition is, I believe, in the first instance spontaneous, almost unconscious; and where the inspiration, as we call it, is most strong and deep, there a conscious purpose is least apparent." Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 39. 5-12.

L. 27. 3. Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 2. 1-3; 10. 8-9. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 41: "Philosophers, who themselves, gifted with imagination, understand its ways of working, acknowledge that there is about the origin of the poetic impulse something which defies analysis, — born not taught, — inexplicable and mysterious. Plato's few words upon it in *Ion* are worth all Aristotle's methodical treatise on poetry."

P. 6, l. 4. 1. Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 10. 5-7; 14. 6-10.

L. 24. 2. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "Byron": "Wordsworth's simplicity is in the power with which he feels the resources of joy offered to us in nature, offered to us in the primary human affections and duties, and in the power with which, in his moments of inspiration, he renders this joy and makes us, too, feel it. . . . But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion." Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 17: "You admire Homer, Æschylus, Shakespeare, perhaps Scott and Wordsworth and Shelley, but where did these get their inspiration? . . . by going straight to the true sources of all poetry, by knowing and loving

nature, by acquaintance with their own hearts, and by knowledge of their fellow-men."

P. 7, l. 4. 1. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 12: "To appeal to the higher side of human nature, and to strengthen it, to come to its rescue when it is overborne by worldliness and material interests, to support it by great truths, set forth in their most attractive form,—this is the only worthy aim, the adequate end of all poetic endeavor." Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 46. 4-6.

L. 19. 2. Cf. Bagehot, *Literary Studies*, II., 389: "A dressy literature, an exaggerated literature, seem to be fated to us; these are our curses." Harrison, *Choice of Books*, 23: "If you find Milton, Dante, Calderon, Goethe, so much Hebrew-Greek to you; if your Homer and Virgil, your Molière and Scott rest year after year undisturbed, . . . and you are wont to leave the Bible and the Imitation for some wet Sunday afternoon . . . your mental digestion is ruined or sadly out of order."

P. 8, l. 10. 1. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, Ch. V.

L. 13. 2. Aristotle says, "Art imitates nature," but by imitation he means, not copying, but a creative act by which the various elements are united into an organic whole,—an ideal. How extremely difficult this creative imitation is has been beautifully expressed by Sir Henry Taylor:—

" 'Tis a speech
That by a language of familiar lowness
Enhances what of more heroic vein
Is next to follow. But one fault it hath;
It fits too close to life's realities,
In truth to Nature, missing truth to Art."—*A Sicilian Summer*.

Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 162. 31 *et seq.*

L. 27. 3. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "Wordsworth": "Wordsworth's poetry, when he is at his best, is inevitable, as inevitable as nature herself. It might seem that nature not only gave him the matter for his poem, but wrote his poem for him." Cf. Newman, *Poetry with Reference to Aristotle's Poetics*, 27. 6-15; Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 11. 8-12.

P. 9, l. 3. 1. Wordsworth here agrees with Aristotle who was the first critic to insist that poetry is an emotional delight, its end to give pleasure. Of course here Aristotle distinguishes between the higher and lower forms of pleasure, and means æsthetic delight coming from contemplating the

beautiful. Cf. Butcher, *Glimpses of Greek Genius*, for a study of Aristotle's idea. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 11: "As to the aim which the poets set before him, the end which poetry is meant to fulfil, what shall be said? Here the critics, ancient and modern, answer almost with one voice, that the end is to give pleasure." Cf. Dallas, *Gay Science*, Ch. V.; Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 9. 12-16; Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 11. 16-12. 7.

L. 7. 2. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "Gray": "The language of genuine poetry is the language of one composing with his eye on the subject; its evolution that of a thing which has been plunged into the poet's soul until it comes forth naturally and necessarily."

L. 12. 3. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "Wordsworth": "Long ago in speaking of Homer, I said that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness." Cf. Newman, *Aristotle's Poetics*, 22. 15-30.

L. 31. 4. Cf. Newman, *Aristotle's Poetics*, 12. 16-20; Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 9. 5-7. Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Ch. XXI. "The strength of poetry is in its thought, not in its form; and with great lyrists, their music is always secondary, and their substance, primary. —
RUSKIN.

"Readers of superior judgment may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are executed. It must be expected that many lines and phrases will not exactly suit their taste. It will perhaps appear to them that, wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity." — *Advertisement* (1798).

P. 10, l. 7. 1. Aristotle in his *Poetics* places little stress on the idea that metre is essential to poetry. Says Professor Butcher, "It seems that he was inclined to extend the meaning of the word *poet* to include any prose writer whose work was an 'imitation' (creation) within the artistic meaning of the term." Keble says, "This notion of the uses of metre as subsidiary to the end we attribute to poetry may seem to be confirmed by references to the compositions to which the term *poetry* is applied without any sort of metre." Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 9. 5-7; Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 11. 4-25; Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 149. 28 *et seq.*

P. 11, l. 9. 1. Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 182. 9 *et seq.* "A

poet should think like a genius, but talk the same language as any one else." — SCHOPENHAUER, *Art in Literature*.

L. 12. 2. "It might have been foreseen that, in the rotations of mind, the province of poetry in prose would find its assertor. . . . Prose will exert in due measure all the varied charms of poetry down to the rhythm which, as in Cicero, Michelet, or Newman, gives its musical value to every syllable." — PATER. Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 170. 25 *et seq.*; Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 9. 5-7; Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 11. 8-25. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 51: "I grant that the old limits between prose and poetry tend to disappear." Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, Ch. XIV. Whipple says of Emerson, "His greatest poetic achievements have been in prose."

P. 12, l. 14. 1. Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 7. 3 *et seq.* Pater, *Appreciations*, 6: "All beauty is, in the long run, only *fineness* of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accumulation of speech to the vision within." Cf. Bagehot, *Literary Studies*, II.: *The Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque in Art and Poetry*.

P. 13, l. 20. 1. "It was part of Wordsworth's great message to this country to remind us that the sphere of the poet is not only in the extraordinary, but in the ordinary and common." — Rev. F. W. ROBERTSON.

Pater, *Appreciations*, 12: "Great mental force certainly was needed by Wordsworth to break through the consecrated poetic associations of a century and speak the language that was his, that was to become in a measure the language of the next generation."

L. 24. 2. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 8: "A great poet must be a man made wise by large experience, much feeling, and deep reflection; above all, he must have a hold of the great central truth of things." Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 148: "A poem is that species of composition which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having this object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part." Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 38. 16 *et seq.*; Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 31. 18-32. 7; Tennyson, *The Poet*.

P. 15, l. 2. 1. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 3: "He does not feel differently from other men, but he feels more."

"A work of art is an idealised copy of human life, — of character, emotion, action, — under forms manifest to sense." — BUTCHER.

"Poetry has ever recognised these two great offices, distinct though allied, — the one, that of representing the actual world; the other, that of creating an ideal region, into which spirits whom this world has wearied may retire. . . . A perfect poet ought to discharge both these great offices of poetry." — DE VERE, *Two Schools of Poetry*. Cf. Newman, *Aristotle's Poetics*, II. 4-10; Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 150. 5 *et seq.*

L. 13. 2. "Depend upon it, you would gain unspeakably if you would learn with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and the comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out through dull gray eyes, and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones." — GEORGE ELIOT.

L. 27. 3. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism. The Study of Poetry*, 55: "Good literature never will lose currency with the world; in spite of momentary appearances, it never will lose supremacy. Currency and supremacy are insured to it . . . by the instinct of self-preservation in humanity."

P. 16, l. 1. 1. Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 9. 33-11. 7; Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 13. 6-26. 11; Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 155.

De Vere, *Essays, Literary and Ethical*, 10: "Poetry is but the flashing eye and philosophy the brooding brow, of one and the same contemplative Intelligence."

Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, 178: "Under every poetry, it has been said, there lies a philosophy. Rather, it may almost be said, every poetry is philosophy."

"Poetry is more philosophic and of higher worth than history." — ARISTOTLE, *Poetics*. Both poetry and philosophy deal with the universal, and have their meeting-point in it; the one expresses the universal through the imagination, the other through the reason.

L. 7. 2. "It is the poet's function to relate not what has happened, but what may happen according to the law of necessary sequence." — ARISTOTLE, *Poetics*.

"Art commends not counterparts and copies,
But from our life a nobler life would shape:

Bodies celestial from terrestrial raise,
And teach us not jūjunely what we are,
But what we may be, when the Parian block
Yields to the hand of Phidias."

— Sir H. TAYLOR, *A Sicilian Summer*.

L. 16. 3. Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 11. 15; Newman, *Aristotle's Poetics*, 10. 6-7; Dallas, *Gay Science; The Agreement of the Critics*.

L. 21. 4. Aristotle in his *Ethics* implies that it is to the man of moral insight that ethical questions are to be submitted, and in his *Poetics* he implies that it is to the man of sure and sound appreciation that the question of taste is to be submitted. In either case the judgment will be immediate.

P. 17, l. 26, 1. Cf. Excursion, Proem, *On Man, on Nature*, etc. "The whole grand idea is that God has made these two — man and nature — for one another and to develop each other; and this mighty object is, that we should realize, in the marriage of the mind and the external world, the pre-arranged harmony. It is a sketch which is filled up in various ways in the minor poems. It forms the true burden of the 'Excursion' and the 'Prelude.'" — STOPFORD BROOKE, *Theology in the English Poets*.

P. 18, l. 11. 1. Cf. Arnold, *Discourses in America*, "Numbers."

P. 19, l. 1. Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 38. 16; Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 57. 1-27. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "Wordsworth": "It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, — to the question, How to live?" Cf. Symonds, J. A., *Essays, Speculative and Suggestive*: "Is Poetry a Criticism of Life?"

L. 21. 2. Science deals with facts; poetry with truths. Facts reveal what has been; truths what must be. Lowell (*Latest Literary Essays*, 183), says, "The more she (science) makes one lobe of the brain Aristotelian, so much more will the other intrigue for an invitation to the banquet of Plato."

Stopford Brooke, *Theology in English Poets*: "Wordsworth disliked, as much as Socrates did, the people who would believe in nothing or consider nothing but that which lay before their eyes." Cf. "Wordsworth's Relation to Science," *Wordsworth Society Transactions*.

L. 27. 3. Cf. Pater, *Appreciations*, 15: "A true artist will remember

that, as the very word *ornament* indicates what is in itself non-essential, so the 'one beauty' of all literary style is of its very essence and independent, in prose and verse alike, of all removable decoration."

P. 20, l. 21. 1. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "Maurice de Guérin": "Poetry interprets in two ways; it interprets by expressing with magical felicity the physiognomy and movement of the outward world, and it interprets by expressing, with inspired conviction, the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature. In other words, poetry is interpretative, both by having *natural magic* in it and by having *moral profundity*."

P. 21, l. 25. 1. Cf. Pater, *Appreciations*: "With him (Wordsworth) metre is but an additional grace, accessory to that deeper music of words and sounds, that moving power, which they exercise in the nobler prose, no less than in formal poetry." Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 186. 11. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, "Prose Poets."

P. 25, l. 12. 1. Cf. Ruskin, *The Imagination; Modern Painters*, Vol. II., part III., Chs. I.-IV.

L. 31. 2. Cf. Newman, *Aristotle's Poetics*, 15. 20 *et seq.*; Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*, *Daffodils*, *Ode On Intimations of Immortality*; Myers' *Life of Wordsworth*, 144. Dallas, *Gay Science*, I., 318: "Given the magic words, given the magic touch . . . and all good poetry and art will force the burial places of memory to render up their dead. . . . The poetry of Wordsworth abounds with passages that vividly refer to the concealed life of the mind and the secret of poetry."

"Aristotle says its origin is in the after effect of a sensation, the continued presence of an impression after the object which first excited it has been withdrawn from actual experience." — WALLACE, *Aristotle's Psychology*.

Dowden, *Transcripts and Studies*, 114, 115: "His creative mood was itself a return upon some moment or season of involuntary rapture or vision."

P. 26, l. 23. 1. "Poetry must have truth and seriousness in subject, felicity and perfection in form." — ARNOLD.

P. 27, l. 18. 1. Cf. Dowden, *Transcripts and Studies*, 143: "Not a few of the later readings in Wordsworth's text had their origin in the writer's wish to temper some expression which seemed too harsh or violent,

to bring within bounds some extravagance, or to tone down into harmony with its surroundings some line of crude vividness."

P. 28, l. 23. 1. Mr. Myers, in comparing this Preface with that of the edition of 1815, says: "His first Preface is violently polemic. . . . In his Preface of 1815 he is not less severe on false sentiment and false observation. But his views of the complexity and dignity of poetry have been much developed, and he is willing now to draw his favorable instances (not from *Babes in the Wood*), but from Shakespeare, Milton, Virgil, and himself." Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 178.

P. 29, l. 22. 1. Cf. Dowden, *Transcripts and Studies; Interpretation of Literature*; J. A. Symonds, *Essays, Speculative and Suggestive*, I., 98; *On Some Principles of Criticism*; Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, 6. Robertson, *Lectures and Addresses*, 163: "And here lies the great difficulty, the peculiar difficulty of our age; it is an age of cant, without love, of criticism, without reverence. . . . What we want is the old spirit of our forefathers; the firm conviction that not by criticism, but by sympathy, we must understand."



APPENDIX (1802-1845).

P. 33, l. 12. 1. Cf. Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*, 5. 8-14; Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 2. 27-30.

L. 20. 2. Cf. De Vere, *Essays, Literary and Ethical*: "Literature begins by being a Vocation or an Art; it becomes subsequently a Profession; in its decline it sinks into a Trade."

Cf. Keats, *Sleep and Poetry*:—

"A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of Poesy."

P. 34, l. 22. 1. Cf. Lowell, *Latest Literary Essays*, 2: "Diction was expected to do for imagination what only imagination could do for it, and the magic which was personal to the magician was supposed to reside in the formula."

P. 35, l. 30. 1. Cf. Corson, *Introduction to Browning*, "Spiritual Ebb and Flow in English Poetry."

PREFACE (1815-1845).

P. 41, l. 19. 2. Cf. Sidney, *Defence of Poesy*, 26. 12-31. 17. Pastoral, elegiac, iambic, satiric, comedy, tragedy, the lyric, the epic.

P. 43, l. 21. 1. There is no doubt that Wordsworth's classification of his poems was the correct one. Mr. Arnold attempted a revision, but it can hardly be considered as an improvement. Professor Knight has used the chronological arrangement in his edition of the poet's works, and with good reason, we think, as his plan is to present the growth of Wordsworth's mind and art.

P. 45, l. 25. 1. Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Ch. IV.; Dallas, *Gay Science*, I., Ch. VI.; Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. II., Chs. I.-IV.

P. 55, l. 7. 1. "Fancy plays like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy; but Imagination is a pilgrim on the earth, and her home in heaven." — RUSKIN.



ESSAY SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE (1815-1845).

P. 59, l. 13. 1. The nation, as the individual, has three periods in its relation to poetry and art: first, youth, or the heroic, creative period; second, manhood, or the materialistic and critical period; and third, when there is a return to the early joys and loves, on the part of some. Wordsworth expresses this in

" My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky;
 So was it when my life began;
 So is it now I am a man;
 So be it when I grow old,
 Or let me die!"

L. 17. 2. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "The Study of Poetry": "We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more worthily than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us."

P. 60, l. 31. 1. Cf. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "The Study of Poetry": "But if we conceive thus highly of the destinies of poetry, we must also set our standard for poetry high, since poetry to be capable of fulfilling such high destinies must be poetry of a high order of excellence." Lowell, *Democracy and other Essays*, 116: "The first lesson in reading well is that which teaches us to distinguish between literature and merely printed matter."

P. 61, l. 28. 1. "The thoughts which inspire a vigorous literature are those which have been quickened by experience. . . . Action and suffering, not abstraction, bequeath experience, and experience communicates reality to thought." — DE VERE, *Literature in its Social Aspects*.

"That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss I would believe,
Abundant recompense. — *Tintern Abbey*.

"So once it would have been, — 'tis so no more;
I have submitted to a new control;
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanized my soul. — *Peele Castle*.

"We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering." — *Intimations of Immortality*.

P. 62, l. 11. 1. Cf. Lowell, *Latest Literary Essays*, 6: "Through the whole eighteenth century the artificial school of poetry reigned by a kind of undivine right over a public which admired — and yawned."

L. 14. 2. Cf. Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, 187: "Other poetry becomes trifling when we are making our inevitable passages through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Wordsworth's alone retains its power. We love him the more as we grow older and become more deeply impressed with the sadness and seriousness of life. We are apt to grow

weary of his rivals when we have finally quitted the regions of youthful enchantment."

L. 16. 3. Cf. Arnold, *On Translating Homer*, 200: "Homer is rapid in his movement, Homer is plain in his words and style. Homer is simple in his ideas, Homer is noble in his manner." Bagehot, *Literary Studies*, 353: "English literature contains one great, one nearly perfect, model of pure style in the literary expression of typical *sentiment*; and one not perfect, but gigantic and close approximation to perfection in the pure delineation of objective character. Wordsworth, perhaps, comes as near to choice purity of style in sentiment as is possible. Milton, with exceptions and conditions, approaches perfection by the strenuous purity with which he depicts character."

L. 26, 4. Cf. Dowden, *Transcripts and Studies*, 244: "The poetry of Wordsworth brought a new thing into English literature, and its speech was at first an utterance in an unknown tongue."

257: "If therefore we would exclude, as far as possible, a personal disturbing element in our recognition and judgment of literature and art, we shall do well to keep constantly in the company of some one of the universal writers."

P. 62, l. 31. 5. Cf. Shairp, *Aspects of Poetry*, 57: "Let us then take courage, and accept for a time, as settled, the old conviction that the moral substance of human nature is the soil on which true poetry grows."

Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, "Milton," 63: "The mighty power of poetry and art is generally admitted. But where the soul of this power, of this power at its best, chiefly resides, very many of us fail to see. It resides chiefly in the refining and elevation wrought in us by the high and rare excellence of the great style."

Lang, *Essays in Little*, 181: "Science advances, old knowledge becomes ignorance; it is poetry that does not die, and that will not die."

P. 66, l. 15. 1. Jeffrey, the famous Edinburgh reviewer, pronounced the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* "beyond doubt the most illegible and unintelligible part of the publication (*Lyrical Ballads*). We can pretend to give no analysis or explanation of it." Cf. *Critical Essays*, Francis Jeffrey, *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1807-November, 1814; and for contrast compare Lamb's review of the *Excursion* in the *Quarterly*, October, 1814. These represent what some one has called *Eyes and No Eyes*.

P. 67, l. 14. 1. Cf. Edmund Gosse, *From Shakespeare to Pope and Eighteenth Century Literature*.

P. 68, l. 2. 1. Cf. Wordsworth, sonnet, *Personal Talk* :—

“Books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear:
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle lady married to the Moor,
And heavenly Una, with her milk-white lamb.”

P. 88, l. 18. 1. Cf. Dallas, *Gay Science*, Chs. I.–VII.; Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. II., Part III., Chs. I.–IV.; C. C. Everett, *Poetry, Comedy and Duty*, Chs. I.–IV.

P. 90, l. 14. 1. Cf. Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, Vol. III., Ch. IV.: “Art is valuable or otherwise, only as it expresses the personality, activity, and living perception of a good and great human soul.”

L. 27. 2. Ruskin’s *Modern Painters* is but an expansion of this principle of Wordsworth’s art.

P. 93, l. 20. 1.

“O little bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages?
I think not much of yours or of mine,
I hear the roll of the ages.” — TENNYSON.

P. 94, l. 23. 1. Cf. De Vere, *Genius and Passion of Wordsworth, Wisdom and Truth of Wordsworth’s Poetry*. These are two of the very best estimates of Wordsworth’s poetry that we have in the language.

To determine in what degree Wordsworth’s estimate of the results of his own work was prophetic, let us take the testimony of two critics, far removed from each other in time, — Sir Henry Taylor in 1834, and James Russell Lowell in 1884.

“The sanative influence of Mr. Wordsworth’s poetry is felt — where such influence is most wanted — in natures of peculiar sensibility; and it

applies itself to that which in those natures is commonly the peccant part. Gross corruption or demoralization is not ordinarily to be apprehended for such minds; but they are subject to be weakened, wasted, and degraded by the vanities and petty distractions of social life or by accesses of casual and futile amatory sentiment. The love of Mr. Wordsworth's poetry takes possession of such a mind like a virtuous passion, fortifying it against many selfish and many sentimental weaknesses, precluding trivial excitement, and coupling the indulgence (necessary in one way or another) of passionate feeling with serious study and as much intellectual exercise as the understanding may happen to have strength to bear. To such a mind . . . how often and with what an invigorating impulse will those passages occur, in which Mr. Wordsworth has invoked, with all plainness and gravity of style, but with an earnestness not on that account the less impressive, the aid which is requisite to make the weak stand fast: —

“ If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then dread Power,
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination, may my life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners; nurse
My heart in genuine freedom; all pure thoughts
Be with me, — so shall thy unfailing love
Guide and support and cheer me to the end.”

—TAYLOR.

“His teaching, whatever it was, is a part of the air we breathe, and has lost that charm of exclusion and privilege that kindled and kept alive the zeal of his acolytes while it was still sectarian or even heretical. His finest utterances do not merely nestle in the ear by virtue of their music, but in the soul and life by virtue of their meaning. . . . Popular, let us admit, he can never be; but as in Catholic countries men go for a time into retreat from the importunate dissonances of life to collect their better selves again by communion with things that are heavenly, and therefore eternal, so this Chartreuse of Wordsworth, dedicated to the Genius of Solitude, will allure to its imperturbable calm the finer natures and the more highly tempered intellects of every generation, so long as man has any intuition of what is most sacred in his own emotions and sympathies,

or of whatever in outward nature is most capable of awakening them and making them operative, whether to console or strengthen. And over the entrance-gate to that purifying seclusion shall be inscribed, 'The teachers shall shine as the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.'" — LOWELL.



LETTER TO LADY BEAUMONT.

Perhaps no friend of Wordsworth is more deserving of remembrance than Sir George Beaumont. He was among the very first to recognize the high quality of the *Lyrical Ballads*, and by word and deed ministered to the author's strength and encouragement. During the rebuilding of Coleorton Hall, Sir George occupied the farm-house adjoining; and on leaving it in the fall of 1806, he invited the Wordsworths to spend the winter there. As the home at Town End was too small for the growing family, they accepted the invitation, and in October left Grasmere for Leicestershire. While at Coleorton, Wordsworth was busy planning the grounds — especially the winter garden — of the hall, and besides the inscriptions for various places in the grounds, he wrote the following to Lady Beaumont: —

"Lady! the songs of spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers,
While I was planting green, unfading bowers,
And shrubs to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall; and still, as fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady! which your feet shall rove:
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of Spring."

Cf. *Memories of Coleorton*, v. I.

In the year 1807 Wordsworth published the two-volume edition of his poems, and this letter relating to the edition shows that through all the storm of abuse and ribaldry he had lost none of his confidence in the ultimate victory of his ideas. Professor Knight has truly said, "The letter is altogether unique as a literary forecast, and is almost sublime in its calm anticipation of the reversal of temporary opinion by the wiser insight of the future." In October of this year, Jeffrey launched his famous diatribe against Wordsworth, which contained as a closing paragraph the following: "We venture to hope that there is now an end of this folly, and that, like other follies, it will be found to have cured itself by the extravagances resulting from its unbridled indulgence."

There is no recent utterance so full of the spirit and truth of this letter as the first chapter of Frederick Harrison's *Choice of Books*.

P. 96, l. 1. 1. "Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, Tennyson, Carlyle, Whitman, — each in his day has stood in the stocks, and every fool has been free to throw a cabbage-stump or a rotten egg at the convicted culprit." — DOWDEN.

L. 23. 2. "At no period and in no country has the love of Truth existed among men self-occupied, or mainly devoted to external things." — DE VERE.

"The first qualification necessary for appreciating poetry is unworldliness. By worldliness, I mean entanglement in the temporal and the visible." — F. W. ROBERTSON.

P. 97, l. 8. 1. Cf. note 2, p. 1. "What earth's far-off lonely mountains do for the plains and the cities, that Wordsworth has done and will do for literature, and through literature for society, sending down great rivers of higher truth, fresh purifying winds of feeling, to those who least dream from what quarter they come. The more thoughtful of each generation will draw nearer and observe him more closely, will ascend his imaginative heights, and sit under the shadow of his profound meditations, and, in proportion as they do so, will become more noble and pure in heart." — SHAIRP.

"Not Milton's keen, translunar music thine;
Not Shakespeare's cloudless, boundless human view;
Not Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine;
Nor yet the wizard twilight Coleridge knew.



"What hadst thou that could make so large amends
 For all thou hadst not and thy peers possessed?
 Motion and fire, swift means to radiant ends?
Thou hadst for weary feet the gift of rest.

"From Shelley's dazzling glow or thunderous haze,
 From Byron's tempest anger, tempest mirth,
 Men turned to thee, and found not blast and blaze,
 Tumult of tottering heavens, but peace on earth.

"Nor peace that grows by Lethe, scentless flower,
 There in white languors to decline and cease;
 But peace whose names are also rapture, power,
 Clear sight and love: for these are parts of peace.

"He felt the charm of childhood, grace of youth,
 Grandeur of age, insisting to be sung.
 The impassioned argument was simple truth,
 Half wondering at its own melodious tongue.

"Impassioned? Ay, to the heart's ecstatic core!
 But far removed were clangor, storm, and feud;
 For plenteous health was his exceeding store
 Of Joy, and an *impassioned quietude*." — WILLIAM WATSON.

P. 98, l. 16. 1. "The depth of Wordsworth's devotion to true liberty is shown by the large number of his best sonnets devoted to the illustration of events which record her history and vindicate her claims. In them alone are a breadth and variety of thought seldom to be found in the whole compass of a poet's works. . . . The liberty Wordsworth sings in a strain at once impassioned and profound is a liberty which *cannot* forget its responsibilities, and *cannot* but exult yet more in its duties than its privileges." — DE VERE.

P. 99, l. 13. 1. "The noises and sights and talk, the whirl and volatility of life around us, are too strong for us. A society which is forever gossiping in a sort of perpetual 'drum' loses the very faculty of caring for anything but 'early copies,' and the last tale out." — FREDERICK HARRISON.

P. 100, 2. 1.

" Ah! since dark days still bring to light
 Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
 Time may restore us in his course
 Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
 But where will Europe's latter hour
 Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
 Others will teach us how to dare,
 And against fear our breasts to steel;
 Others will strengthen us to bear —
 But who, ah! who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
 Others will front it fearlessly —
 But who, like him, will put it by?" — MATTHEW ARNOLD.

" Enough that there is none since risen who sings
 A song so gotten of the immediate soul,
 So instant from the vital fount of things
 Which is our source and goal;
 And though at touch of later hands there float
 More artful tones than from his lyre he drew,
 Ages may pass ere trills another note
 So sweet, so pure, so true." — WILLIAM WATSON.



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